

## **U.S. Government Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons**

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Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. It is my honor to be here today to talk about America's leadership in the global effort to eradicate trafficking in persons, and I am pleased to have the chance to thank you for your personal action in this fight. Your recent CODEL on human trafficking to Moldova, Albania, Italy, and Greece drew the attention of the governments in those countries, and it is a trip we hope will lay the groundwork for other successful CODELs focused on human trafficking. I also want to thank Mrs. Harris, Mrs. Maloney, and others on this committee for their commitment to ending modern-day slavery.

It is nearly impossible for me to begin a discussion of trafficking in persons without presenting the human face of the issue, because it is, after all, real women, real children, and real men we are fighting for.

When you see, as I have, young girls and boys like Khan, who have been trafficked into forced labor, subjected to inhumane working conditions, brutally abused, even scarred by industrial chemicals deliberately poured on them, you must speak out on their behalf.

When you see, as I have, teenage girls and young women like Katya, who have been trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation, threatened with their lives and the lives of their children, violated by unthinkable numbers of men day after day, and cruelly treated, you are compelled to oppose this crime.

When you see, as I have, people from all corners of the globe, trafficked — bought and sold — forced into domestic servitude slavery and camel jockey slavery and even made to be child soldiers, you become nothing less than a 21st century abolitionist.

President Bush eloquently set the tone for U.S. action on this issue at the United Nations General Assembly when he said to the world, "We must show new energy in fighting back an old evil. Nearly two centuries after the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, and more than a century after slavery was officially ended in its last strongholds, the trade in human beings for any purpose must not be allowed to thrive in our time."

I'm here today to give you an overview of U.S. efforts to fight this old evil. And while we have much yet to do, under the leadership of Congress and the President, you'll see we have gotten off to a positive start.

*The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons*

I'll begin with the efforts of my office in the State Department, the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, which was created by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

First, we are monitoring worldwide human trafficking patterns and issuing a comprehensive annual report in order to stimulate increased action by foreign governments and regional coordination. This report has achieved very promising results. For instance, in the months leading up to and directly following the 2003 and 2004 *Trafficking in Persons Reports*, we saw a surge in government activity around the world: the passage of new anti-trafficking laws, increased prosecutions of traffickers, national public service announcements and much more.

Whether it was countries' own awakening to the issue or their desire to improve their rating on our report, we can't say for sure. But what we do know is the report has become an invaluable diplomatic tool the State Department uses to accelerate progress abroad, and we are working vigorously with governments to achieve positive actions. We hope the 2005 report covering 150 countries, to be released by Secretary Rice on June 1, will achieve even greater results for people vulnerable to trafficking.

In addition to the report, a second core function of my office is coordinating U.S. financial assistance to support anti-trafficking programs around the world. With fiscal year 2004 funding, the U.S. obligated more than \$96 million to anti-trafficking in persons efforts abroad, boosting our total to more than \$295 million over four years. USAID and the Departments of State, Labor, Justice, and Homeland Security are involved in these efforts in foreign countries. We are investing in prevention, protection, and prosecution to stop the flow of new people into trafficking, to ensure they are safe once rescued from slavery, and to ensure justice is served by putting traffickers in jail for significant amounts of time.

Finally, my office takes its congressional mandate to increase public awareness very seriously. We are reaching millions of people around the world through media, public speaking engagements, and other creative communications efforts. This public outreach is leveraged to increase the effectiveness of the report and assistance programs. It is shining a bright light on this problem, accelerating our momentum.

### *Senior Policy Operating Group*

In addition to my role as director of the TIP Office, I serve as chairman of the Senior Policy Operating Group, which implements the policies set forth by the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons headed by Secretary Rice.

From this perspective, I can tell you that each of the U.S. government agencies involved in anti-trafficking in persons efforts has developed a strategic plan to guide its anti-TIP efforts. Through the SPOG, we are working to coordinate these plans and all of our actions to end modern-day slavery.

A couple of important SPOG developments to note. First, we are bringing new energy to fighting trafficking in persons by coordinating our grant programs. We are analyzing where funds are most needed, where governments have the will and capacity to participate, and where we can have the most impact for victims.

Secondly, we are making the fight against child sex tourism a top priority. This heinous type of human trafficking highlighted by President Bush's speech to the U.N. General Assembly involves people traveling to foreign countries to pay for sex with children. By U.S. law, and by international agreement, all children under 18 who are exploited abroad for commercial sex are considered trafficking victims, and we are working to stop this abuse.

We also are increasing attention to the "demand" side of modern-day slavery and how consumer countries have a responsibility just as source countries do. These are important directions, and the Senior Policy Operating Group is committed to seeing them through.

### *Financial Implications of Trafficking in Persons*

Now, before I conclude, I want to say how pleased I am that this subcommittee is bringing new energy to the anti-trafficking movement by examining the financial aspects of this crime.

We know human trafficking fuels organized crime, and there is a great danger in this, because where organized crime flourishes, governments and the rule of law are weakened, and people suffer.

According to the Congressional Research Service, human trafficking is considered the third largest source of profits for organized crime worldwide after the arms and drug trades, and the U.S. Government estimates it generates \$9.5 billion in annual

revenue. The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime has concluded that the globalization of trafficking has allowed crime groups formerly active in specific routes or regions to expand the geographical scope of their activities to explore new markets.

Trafficking in persons is clearly a lucrative criminal enterprise closely connected with money laundering, drug trafficking, document forgery, and human smuggling. It is an illegal activity with high profit margin and low risk, making it very attractive to criminals. A trafficker may receive a few hundred to thousands of dollars from the work of a trafficked child laborer, and a brothel owner may obtain profits of a few thousand to tens of thousands of dollars for each trafficked woman forced into prostitution.

Traffickers benefit from this crime because the costs of recruitment, transportation, and documentation are small compared to the enormous profits and because there is a low risk of prosecution.

Many poor countries, which are main targets for traffickers, find much-needed money going to crime bosses instead of the countries' economies.

More research is needed for us to get a better understanding of just how traffickers and organized crime groups are using the modern-day slave trade to launder money and finance other criminal activities. Your subcommittee can play a vital role in improving our understanding in this area.

### *Conclusion*

In just five years since we began issuing a report on human trafficking, nations have found so much common ground. So many countries that did not recognize their slavery problems four years ago are now committed to eradicating it. The U.S. has dramatically increased its efforts as well, investing significant amounts of money internationally to fight human trafficking.

Domestically, the Department of Homeland Security has taken an aggressive approach to the worldwide problem of human trafficking investigating and providing short- and long-term immigration relief to trafficking victims as well as arresting, processing, detaining, and removing undocumented traffickers from the United States. Additionally, the Department of Health and Human Services has launched a public awareness campaign to help rescue victims, including the first national 24-hour hotline. In comparing the last three years to the previous three years, the Department of Justice has nearly tripled the number of prosecutions of human traffickers. The Department of Defense has issued a zero-tolerance policy

on trafficking in persons for its 3,000,000 service members, civilian employees and contractors, and Defense personnel overseas receive education and training on human trafficking. Other agencies are doing great work as well.

The importance of this cooperation and action cannot be underestimated because trafficking poses a serious multidimensional threat to human rights, public health, and the safety and security of communities worldwide. It is a crime that has troubling implications, not just to Khan and Katya and other trafficking victims, but to us all.

I am now happy to take your questions.